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THE BIMINI RESEARCH EXPERIENCE FOR ONR SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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LONG TERM GOALS

The long term goal of this project is to influence and recruit minorities and underprivileged students into careers in the Marine Sciences. This segment of the population is not ordinarily aware of the Navy's role in professional Oceanography. The ultimate goal is to produce professional Oceanographers for the Navy or for projects related to the Navy's mission. A secondary goal is to make these students aware that the Navy is interested in academic research in the Marine Sciences and that there are Naval careers in Oceanography.

TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES

The objective is to bring at least twenty qualified students to the Bimini Biological Field Station, South Bimini, Bahamas for a four-day total research experience. The students join in an on-going research project in telemetry tracking of lemon sharks as full participating staff members. They receive training in the use of ultrasonic telemetry equipment and charting devices. They learn to handle small boats and generally carry out all the duties of the graduate staff. The object is to allow these inner city students to truly experience scientific, field research in the marine environment.

APPROACH

Written requests are sent to Marine Biology teachers of 29 Dade County High Schools at the start of the school year. The teachers select three students from each school as candidates for the Bimini trip. Criteria for the selection include a minimum age of 16 and it is explained that the program seeks equal numbers of men and women without regard to race or ethnic background. Selection should be based on academic standing, interest and economic status. In large part, candidates should be chosen on the basis that they could not afford to participate in this type of research experience. Each of the candidates is interviewed by Dr. Gruber who makes the final selection of 20.

TASKS COMPLETED

Twenty students were taken to Bimini between January, 1997 and March, 1997 under the past year's ONR Science Student Program. Their makeup was 8 women and 12 men. The ethnic/racial breakdown was: 10 Hispanic, 7 Caucasian, and 3 African-American. The students were flown to the Station in groups of three or four: Once in October, 1996; Twice in November, 1996; Once in December, 1996, January, 1997, March, 1997. Each of the 20 students completed a journal and was paid a stipend of \$50.00.

RESULTS

The scientific work formed the Thesis research of University of Copenhagen student Susi Manuela Clearmont. Clermont's thesis is expected to be completed in December, 1998 and the published works will give credit for support to the Office of Naval research.

IMPACTS

Twenty at risk students were exposed to real science in a way that would be impossible if not for ONR support. These students will have an entirely new orientation and this kind of unique experience could change their lives.

TRANSITIONS

none

RELATED PROJECTS

none